



news from the  
**USDA Forest Service – Savannah River**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 15, 2012

Where there's smoke, there's fire -- and where there's fire, there's an opportunity for managing important habitat for wildlife and vegetation. United States Forest Service–Savannah River (USFS-SR) is conducting annual prescribed fires. You may see columns of smoke and you may see smoke on roadways. USFS-SR fire managers carefully follow smoke management guidelines established by the United States Forest Service and under the permitting system from South Carolina Forestry Commission to ensure adequate smoke dispersal.

Karen Guevara, Assistant Manager for Infrastructure for Integration and Planning at the United States Department of Energy – Savannah River Operations Office (DOE-SR), said “USFS-SR carefully uses prescribed fires to protect site assets that support ongoing and possible future missions. The prescribed fires are conducted in a way that assures the safety of workers, facilities, and the environment. DOE-SR approves the annual prescribed fire plan prepared by USFS-SR.”

According to Keith Lawrence, USFS-SR Forest Manager, “Historically, the longleaf pine ecosystem was maintained by frequent, yet low intensity fires which burned every 3 to 10 years.”

Charlie Davis, USFS-SR ecologist says, “Fires ignited by lightning, Americans Indians, and then early settlers shaped a longleaf pine forest comprised of fire dependent plant and animal species.” Today, at Savannah River Site, USFS-SR foresters, botanists, and wildlife biologists use prescribed fires to manage several federally endangered species such as Red-cockaded woodpecker and smooth coneflower which thrive in the park-like, grassy understories following prescribed fires.

Lack of prescribed fires has been cited as contributing to extreme wildland fire behavior, such as the fires in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico this past year.

When used properly, prescribed fire is one of the most beneficial and cost-effective habitat management tools available to land managers. Some of the species which are found in the fire dependent longleaf pine ecosystem are Bachman's sparrow, prairie warbler, Henslow's sparrow,

painted bunting, Northern bobwhite quail, flatwoods salamander, pine barren tree frog, and dozens of species of grasses and flowers.

USFS-SR is part of the Department of Agriculture. USFS-SR has provided natural resource management since 1952 at the Savannah River Site under an interagency agreement.

Contact: Anne Kiser, Deputy Forest Manager, 803.725.0297, [akiser@fs.fed.us](mailto:akiser@fs.fed.us)